

Resolution No.:	<u>19-582</u>
Introduced:	<u>August 4, 2020</u>
Adopted:	<u>August 4, 2020</u>

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
COVID-19 Human Services and Community Assistance Non-Departmental
Account (NDA); \$3,354,084 (Source of Funds: Federal Grant)
African American Health Program Executive Committee Targeted COVID
Response

And

Resolution to Amend the FY21 Operating Budget for the Montgomery County
Government, Resolution 19-472, Section G, Designation of Entities for Non-
Competitive Contract Award Status: The National Center for Children and
Families, Inc.

Background

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. A new coronavirus disease, named COVID-19, appeared in China in December 2019 and spread extremely quickly. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the disease a pandemic. By August 2, 2020 there were more than 4.6 million confirmed cases and over 154,000 confirmed deaths in the United States. On August 2, the State of Maryland reported 90,274 confirmed cases and 3,381 confirmed deaths statewide. In Montgomery County there were 17,758 confirmed cases and 752 confirmed deaths.

3. The African American and Black population has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 nationally and locally with higher death rates than other demographic populations. Montgomery County data on May 5 showed the death rate for non-Hispanic Blacks as 41.1 compared to 31.2 for non-Hispanic Whites and 28.1 for the total County population. This disparity persists and the County data as of July 31 shows a death rate of 87.3 for non-Hispanic Blacks compared to 76.6 for non-Hispanic Whites and 72.1 for the overall County population. Statewide, as of July 17, Black residents were identified as 28.7% of confirmed cases but 40.5% of confirmed deaths (Kaiser Family Foundation).
4. The African American Health Program's mission is to eliminate health disparities and improve the number and quality of years of life for African Americans and people of African descent in Montgomery County. Their vision is that African Americans and people of African descent in Montgomery County will be as healthy and safe as the rest of the population.
5. The African American Health Program Executive Committee has shown a spotlight on the fact that African Americans/Blacks experience worse health outcomes than do other groups during and after epidemics because of long term existing chronic health and social disparities that include: (1) higher rates of underlying health conditions such as hypertension, chronic lung conditions, asthma, and diabetes, and (2) socioeconomic factors such as decreased access to health care and higher rates of poverty and homelessness, and housing instability.
6. Councilmembers Rice and Jawando engaged the African American Health Program Executive Committee on how to provide a targeted response to the disparate impact of COVID-19 on African American and Black residents that recognizes the underlying conditions that are driving the case and death rates and also responds to the diversity within Montgomery County's African American and Black population. The African American Health Program Executive Committee presented a comprehensive response plan that includes targeted testing and contact tracing with follow-up navigation, multi-faceted communications, education and outreach, targeted food assistance, mental health supports and services, and the establishment of a Black Physician Partnership that will connect and support African American and Black residents who test positive with primary care and reduce barriers to appropriate medical follow-up. The African American Health Program Executive Committee will monitor data and analyze outcomes from these efforts. The objective is to dramatically increase the number of African American and Black residents tested for COVID-19 to allow for mitigation and remediation to reduce the spread of the virus and number of deaths.
7. Public notice of this special appropriation was provided by news release.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, in the amount of \$3,354,084 is approved as follows:

	<u>Personnel Expense</u>	<u>Operating Expense</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
COVID-19 Human Services and Community Assistance NDA	\$0	\$3,354,084	\$3,354,084	Federal Grant

These funds must be used by the Executive to implement the African American Health Program Executive Committee's Targeted COVID-19 Response Program for African American and Black residents. The Executive must provide staff support for the overall administration and coordination of the Program and must implement it in collaboration with the African American Health Program Executive Committee and its community-based partner organizations.

The Department of Health and Human Services will coordinate a Targeted Testing effort with the African American Health Program Executive Committee. Testing will be targeted, but not limited to, County zip codes with high numbers of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and where African American and Black residents make up at least 20 percent of the population. A special focus will be put on zip codes 20903, 20904, and 20906. The testing program will include both a permanent testing site in the east county as well as "pop-up" testing in a variety of locations easily accessible to residents. Testing availability will be responsive to transportation barriers, work schedules and family composition. Testing events will be scheduled in collaboration with organizations serving African American and Black communities. Some locations may include church parking lots and recreation centers. The testing program will be linguistically and culturally appropriate. The Executive branch should pursue FEMA reimbursement for all costs related to the implementation of this component of the program, to the extent that those costs are eligible for reimbursement.

Up to \$335,500 must be used for Marketing and Communications. These funds will be used to implement a communications strategy that incorporates social media, phone calls, digital media and mass texting to increase the number of African American and Black residents that are aware of prevention recommendations, the early signs and symptoms of COVID-19, the importance of testing, and how to stay safe if test results are positive or negative.

Up to \$611,875 must be used to provide Educational Information that includes distribution of COVID Kits. The COVID Kits will include a digital touchless thermometer, mask, gloves, hand sanitizer, hand soap, cleaning supplies as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CDC information and guidelines, and other items as appropriate. The Council will review with the African American Health Program Executive Committee the adequacy of the funding for this component in September 2020 and consider how funding for additional COVID Kits, if needed, can be supplied.

The Department of Health and Human Services will coordinate its Contact Tracing program with the African American Health Program Executive Committee to ensure there are linguistically and culturally competent contact tracers. Contact Tracers and associated personnel that may include Nurse Navigators and Community Health Workers will follow-up with residents that have tested positive and with individuals who have been in contact with/exposed to people who have tested positive. Follow-up may include information on how chronic and underlying conditions can impact the severity or likelihood of death from the disease and referrals to primary care physicians. Effective contract tracing will help reduce the spread of the disease. The Executive branch should pursue FEMA reimbursement for all costs related to the implementation of this component of the program, to the extent that those costs are eligible for reimbursement.

Up to \$460,625 must be used to provide Mental Health supports and services. These services will be provided through community-based organizations and may include the hiring of Community Health Workers, Social Workers, and other appropriately trained mental health professionals. The African American Health Program Executive Committee plans to have special supports for victims of domestic violence, homeless persons, Veterans, seniors and children.

Up to \$1,121,084 to establish and support a Black Physician Partnership and provide residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 with financial assistance for co-pays, deductibles, and the cost of medication.

Up to \$825,000 to address Food Insecurity for African American and Black residents. These funds may be used to purchase food as well as to fund a program that provides gift cards or vouchers so that the residents may directly purchase food from a grocery store or other appropriate establishment.

It is the intent of the Council that the African American Health Program may use \$102,000 identified in the County Executive's Recommended Savings Plan from the African American Health Program but not approved by the Council as a savings to support the Data Collection and Analysis component of this COVID response.

This resolution amends Resolution 19-472, Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Award Status to enter into a contract with The National Center for Children and Families, Inc. with the purpose to "Implement the African American Health Program Executive Committee Targeted COVID Response Program" in the amount of \$3,354,084.

The Executive will provide a written progress report on the implementation of this program every two weeks beginning August 28, 2020 until January 1, 2021.

The County will seek reimbursement from the Federal Government for all eligible costs associated with this initiative.

This appropriation is needed to act in response to a public health or safety emergency and to act without delay in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.,
Clerk of the Council